

MUNCH MADNESS: SURVIVAL RECIPES FOR BASKETBALL FANS

**About Connecticut-Grown Edibles
Top Connecticut-Grown Men and Women Hoopsters
Assorted Connecticut Hoops Facts**

A publication of the Connecticut
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**About Munch Madness:
Survival Recipes for Basketball Fans**

Munch Madness: Survival Recipes for Basketball Fans is a lighthearted look at the culinary and nutritional challenges of surviving one of the nation's most popular sporting—and gambling—events. To spice things up, we've included favorite foods and recipes from coaches, former players, devoted fans, and professional chefs.

Problem Gambling Services created *Munch Madness* to promote Connecticut-grown foods while celebrating Connecticut-grown basketball talent from across the decades. Of course, we also hope to raise awareness of problem gambling and the availability of treatment and prevention services for gamblers and their families.

Contributors to the booklet include experts from two worlds: food and basketball. We are grateful to the contributions of the many coaches, chefs, sports writers, university representatives, farmers, and fans who contributed recipes, their favorite NCAA Tournament memories, and opinions on the top Connecticut-grown basketball talent of all time.

We also thank the NCAA for letting us excerpt its guide for student athletes, *Don't Bet On It*. Feel free to copy the excerpts, or download the guide from <http://www.ncaa.org/gambling/dontbetonit/2004.pdf>

Whether you're watching the games alone or hosting a houseful, don't forget to try some of the great recipes, using Connecticut-grown foods, while you cheer on your favorite NCAA Tournament teams.

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Connecticut-Grown for All Seasons

To perform like a champion or to simply look and feel your best, you need to fuel your body and mind with the highest-quality food. The best foods you can get grow right here in the state, courtesy of your “home team,” the Connecticut Farmers.

Did you know that in the United States, food travels an average of 1,500 miles and takes two weeks to get to your plate? During that time, it loses precious nutrients—and flavor—with every mile.

Connecticut-grown foods arrive on your table faster, fresher, and more nutritious. They taste better, and they are better for you and your family.

When you chose Connecticut-grown, you are not only buying the freshest, highest quality foods available but also fueling your local economy and keeping your money and about 50,000 jobs right here in Connecticut. You support your neighbors, preserve open space, and may even slow the growth of property taxes by reducing the demand for municipal services.

Connecticut-grown meats, seafood, eggs, dairy foods, maple syrup, honey, and more are available throughout the entire year. Connecticut-grown fruits and vegetables are most plentiful June through October, but an increasing number of farms grow tomatoes, salad greens, herbs, and other crops in greenhouses during the winter.

You can purchase Connecticut-grown products right at the farm, at local farm stands and farm stores, at more than 85 seasonal farmers markets around the state, and at many retailers, including major supermarkets. Go to www.CTGrown.gov, click on “Publications” at the top of the page for product guides and listings, or ask your favorite retailer for Connecticut-grown products.

For more information about Connecticut-grown foods and the farmers who produce them, please visit the Connecticut Department of Agriculture Web site at www.CTGrown.gov.

Fun Facts About Connecticut-Grown Foods

- Connecticut has approximately 4,200 working farms.
- The largest farms in Connecticut are underwater (aquaculture).
- Connecticut is home to more chickens than people and leads the country in the number of egg-laying birds per acre.
- No other New England state produces as many peaches or pears as Connecticut does.
- Connecticut ranks tenth in the United States in the number of gallons of maple syrup produced and the total number of maple syrup taps. It is fifth in the nation in volume of sap produced per tap.
- Every year, for each person in the state, Connecticut farms produce
 - 230 eggs
 - 238 glasses of milk
 - 6 to 7 pounds of apples
 - 3 pounds of sweet corn
 - 2 quarts of strawberries

About Problem Gambling Services

Since 1982, Problem Gambling Services of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Service has helped gamblers and their families cope with the consequences of problem gambling and regain control over their lives. Through PGS and the Bettor Choice Programs it funds, counseling services are available at multiple locations across Connecticut.

FAQs

When should I worry about my gambling or someone else's?

Gambling becomes a problem when it causes negative consequences for gamblers or the people around them. Gambling-related problems can occur in almost every area of life. Mounting bills, problems at work, arguments with family members, guilt over losses, ignored medical concerns, neglect of friendships, and loss of hope are among the many problems that should signal concern.

Are gambling problems common?

At some point in their lives, as many as 5 percent of Connecticut adults have experienced problems caused by their gambling. Research suggests that teenagers are not immune to gambling problems and that negative consequences from gambling may be more common for teens than for adults.

Is more information available?

Yes. Call the Problem Gambling Helpline, a free and confidential service of PGS and the Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling at 1-800-346-6238, or visit the Problem Gambling Services Web site at www.dmhas.state.ct.us/statewideservices/bettorchoices.htm

If I am ready for help, what kind is available?

PGS and Bettor Choice programs provide professional counseling, financial recovery counseling, and other services. They have successfully helped hundreds of gamblers and families regain control of their lives.

I'm not sure I have a problem. Can I come talk to someone?

Yes. You are welcome to call or come in and speak with one of our counselors.

I care about someone who gambles too much. What do I say?

A simple and straightforward approach to letting someone know you are concerned is often most helpful. That sounds easier to do than it really is. Not everyone will be thankful that someone cares enough to share his or her concern. None of us can control what a person says or does in reaction to what we say. We can, however, control *what* we say, *how* we say it, and *where* and *when* we talk to a person. For information about how to speak with someone whose behavior concerns you, please call PGS at 860-344-2244.

How much does counseling cost?

You might. PGS offers some services at no charge and others at reasonable fees. Because most problem gamblers have financial problems, we never refuse treatment because of an inability to pay.

Problem Gambling Services

Make an appointment or get information about counseling services across Connecticut.

2 Vance Drive
Middletown, CT 06457
1-860-344-2244

Problem Gambling Helpline

Free and confidential information and referral services.
1-800-346-6238

Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling

Free and confidential information and referral services.
47 Clapboard Hill Road
Guilford, CT 06437
1-888-789-7777

Barbara Kafka's Baba Ghanouj

Marianne Vandenburg, who contributed this recipe, owns House on the Hill Bed and Breakfast in Waterbury. She loves eggplant! “Of course, eggplant is readily available year round,” she says, “but the local varieties tempt me the most.” Then there’s basketball. “Can I remember basketball at Ohio State University in the early 1960s? I reminisce about it as though it were a Balanchine ballet! I was there while John Havlicek, Jerry Lucas, and Mel Nowell danced with the ball. From the seats above St. John’s Arena, it was every bit as beautiful and graceful as ballet.”

Ingredients

two medium-sized eggplants, about 2 pounds, with no holes in the skin

¼ cup olive oil; 2 tablespoons lemon juice

2 teaspoons garlic, minced

2 teaspoons kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Tools

heavy baking sheet; measuring spoons; two forks

mixing bowl; mixing spoon

Place the oven rack in the center position, and heat the oven to 400 degrees. Place the eggplants on the ungreased baking sheet, and roast until they burst and the centers are very tender, about one and a half hours. Remove from the oven. Using two forks, immediately tear each eggplant open. Scrape the pulp onto the hot baking sheet. Let it sizzle and brown. This will help some of the liquid to evaporate. Discard the skins. Transfer the pulp to a bowl. Continue to pull it apart with the two forks until it is very finely shredded. Beat in the olive oil in a thin, steady stream until well blended. Beat in the lemon juice, garlic, salt, and pepper to taste. Cover, and chill in the refrigerator until serving. The flavors develop over a few days. Serve with fresh vegetables or split, toasted pitas. Yield: about 3 cups.

Bench-Warmer Bacon-Cheddar Jalapeño Poppers

The following recipe comes from Jim Wuelfing, a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross. He heads the Congregation Assistance Program for Problem Gambling Services. At tournament time, don't believe Jim if he tells you a little jalapeño juice or a few seeds are causing his tears, not another Holy Cross season come to an early end.

Ingredients

one 16-ounce package Cheddar cheese; ask the dairy manager to recommend a Connecticut-made cheese
six jalapeño peppers, fresh or bottled
12 slices thinly sliced bacon

Tools

sharp knife
wooden toothpicks
baking sheet

Preheat the broiler. Cut the peppers in half, and remove the seeds. Cut the Cheddar cheese into 12 slices long enough to fit inside the jalapeño halves. Insert the cheese slices into the pepper halves. Wrap each jalapeño in a slice of bacon. Secure with a toothpick if necessary. Place on a medium baking sheet. Broil five to ten minutes or until the bacon is evenly brown.

Bracket-Busting Mango Salsa

Mary Lou Costanzo, the clinical director for Problem Gambling Services, is a less-than-avid sports fan whose husband and son are UConn loyalists. Her husband, Walter Payne Sr., tells us his favorite UConn tournament memory features Scott Burrell, Tate George, and some last-second heroics that lifted UConn over Clemson to reach the regional finals. He still recalls the 1990 rhyme: “It’s Late, It’s Tate, It’s Great!”

Ingredients

two ripe mangoes, diced
zest and juice of one lime—more if you like it soupy
¼ to ½ large red onion, diced
4 or 5 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro or more, depending on taste
salt, pepper, and hot pepper to taste

Tools

sharp knife
mixing bowl

Chop and dice everything, put in a bowl, and mix! You may want to experiment and make this a couple of times to see how much lime juice/cilantro/hot pepper is to your own taste! Serve with chips or crackers and enjoy! If you make this salsa during the summer, be sure to look for Connecticut-grown onions and herbs at farmers markets and roadside stands.

Coach DeMaio's Dill Dip

In the media, there is probably no bigger booster of Connecticut-grown sports than WELI sports director George “the Coach” DeMaio. We have it on good authority that when Mrs. DeMaio makes a fresh batch of dip, all Coach needs is a load of Connecticut-grown fresh veggies and he’s all set for NCAA tournament watching. We thank Coach for sharing this recipe and for all he does to promote Connecticut scholastic sports and our homegrown athletes. Coach’s favorite NCAA tournament memory: the court-length pass from Hamden’s Scott Burrell to a waiting Tate George for the winning basket over Clemson in the 1990 regional semi-finals. Tate’s shot made the “Dream Season,” but only a Dream Pass from a Connecticut Classic made it possible.

Ingredients

1 cup fat-free sour cream
1 cup low-fat mayonnaise
3 tablespoons Pampered Chef dill mix
one small onion, chopped

Tools

mixing bowl
mixing spoon

Mix all ingredients well, and enjoy with carrots, celery, peppers, broccoli, and just about any other crunchy vegetable.

Connecticut Clams With Parsley Pesto

According to Linda Piotrowicz, of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Connecticut leads the Northeast in hard-shell clam production and quality. She found this recipe on *The New York Times* Web site.

Ingredients

2 cups washed parsley leaves—thin stems are OK
salt
½ clove garlic or more to taste
½ cup extra virgin olive oil or more
1 tablespoon sherry vinegar or lemon juice
two dozen littleneck or cherrystone clams—Connecticut-grown, of course—washed and scrubbed

Tools

cast-iron skillet large enough to hold clams or several smaller pans
food processor or blender
scraper
large plate or platter

Set oven rack close to the broiler, turn on broiler, and put cast-iron skillet(s) under it. In the food processor, combine parsley with a pinch of salt, garlic, and about half the oil. Process, adding the rest of the oil gradually. Scrape down the sides of the container if necessary. Add vinegar or lemon juice and a little water to thin the mixture slightly. Taste, and adjust the seasoning. Carefully remove skillet(s) from the oven, add the clams, and return them to the oven. They should open more or less at once, within ten minutes. Remove immediately to the platter to preserve juices. Dab each clam with pesto and serve hot. Clams that do not open are safe to eat; open them with a dull knife, or continue to broil a few minutes longer. Serves four or more.

Choose Connecticut-Grown Shellfish

The Department of Agriculture: Bureau of Aquaculture manages 58,538 acres of aquaculture leases statewide, generating \$1,034,340 in revenue.

Connecticut oysters, which reached a production peak of more than \$45 million in the early 1990s, suffered a severe die-off in the late 1990s, due to the abundance of two naturally occurring pathogens. Oyster production bottomed out in 2005 because of the die-off. Significant recruitment occurred in 2004, 2005, and 2006. Harvesters are currently marketing the 2004 and 2005 oysters. The 2006 production totals should show a gradual increase.

During the years immediately following the die-off, many oyster harvesters turned their attention to clams. In 2005, commercial shellfish operations statewide had hard-clam production of 420,000 bags, valued at more than \$16 million. The 2006 production figures, not yet available, are expected to be similar.

Connecticut's shellfish program must meet the requirements of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program, which is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. The Bureau of Aquaculture classifies growing areas to determine where the water is of the high quality necessary for harvesting shellfish.

There are approximately 500 water-quality monitoring stations located throughout Long Island Sound to effectively evaluate impacts from actual and potential pollution sources. Water-quality data is analyzed, and areas are opened or closed to harvesting based on water quality. In addition, inspectors walk and visually scrutinize the shoreline of every town in Connecticut for potential and actual sources of pollution.

To further ensure the highest quality and safety of every piece of Connecticut-grown shellfish, sampling is performed on shellfish meats, and commercial harvesters and wholesalers are inspected regularly.

Donyell Marshall's Jerk Chicken Wings

Donyell tells us his favorite food for watching March Madness is pasta and meatballs, but because we already had a good sauce recipe, his wife passed along this Marshall family favorite. A solid scorer and an outstanding defensive player, Donyell was an important keystone in the foundation of the Connecticut men's basketball dynasty. Now playing alongside LeBron James with the Cleveland Cavaliers, he remains a Connecticut fan favorite.

Ingredients

- ½ cup jerk sauce, divided
- 1 cup onion, sliced vertically
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- three cloves garlic, minced
- 2½ pounds chicken wings, about 25 wings
- ½ cup light beer
- 3 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 tablespoon hot sauce
- cooking spray

Tools

- large, reclosable plastic bag(s)
- small bowl
- spoon or whisk
- pastry or grill brush

Combine ¼ cup jerk sauce, onion, lemon juice, salt, and pepper in plastic bag. Add chicken to bag and seal. Marinate overnight in refrigerator, turning occasionally. Preheat grill to medium-high. Remove chicken from bag; discard marinade. Combine the rest of the jerk sauce, beer, ketchup, and hot sauce; mix. Brush the sauce over the chicken wings. Coat the grill rack with cooking spray. Place the chicken on the rack; grill about twenty minutes or until done, basting with sauce and turning frequently.

Final Four Cookies

Peter Nucci, the president and CEO of The Connection Inc., contributed this recipe. Peter's favorite memory: "There are too many great memories involving UConn men's and women's basketball to try to pick a favorite. It's been a lot of fun."

Ingredients

1 cup all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking powder; ½ teaspoon baking soda
1 cup rolled oats; ½ cup ground flaxseed meal or wheat germ
9 tablespoons (one stick plus 1 tablespoon) butter at room temperature
½ cup dark brown sugar; ½ cup white sugar
one large Connecticut-fresh egg; ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
½ cup dried cranberries
½ cup chopped walnuts
½ cup white chocolate chips.

Tools

measuring cups, liquid and dry; measuring spoons
two 3- to 4-quart mixing bowls; electric mixer
mixing spoon or scraper
two cookie sheets; wire cooling racks; table fork

Heat oven to 350 degrees. In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda, oats, and flaxseed meal. In the other bowl, combine butter and sugars. Beat until smooth. Add egg and vanilla, and beat again. Add flour mixture and beat until well blended. Add cranberries, walnuts, and white chocolate chips, and mix gently until blended. Refrigerate bowl for ten minutes. Grease the cookie sheets. Roll tablespoons of dough into balls, placing them 1½ inches apart on baking sheets. Flatten each ball gently with a fork, crisscrossing pattern. Place sheets in oven on two racks. Bake until cookies are just gold, about 15 minutes. They will still be soft when hot. Cool cookies on the sheet for five minutes; then remove to finish cooling on a wire rack. Yield: three dozen cookies.

‘Go Blue!’ Deviled Eggs

Susan McLaughlin, primary prevention coordinator at PGS, is a native Vermonter whose idea of March Madness cooking is maple sugar on snow with pickles and homemade cider doughnuts. More in line with Connecticut tastes, she’s come up with this classic to celebrate Central Connecticut State University, where her son and daughter are students. They are happy this year; the Blue Devils are headed for the Big Dance.

Ingredients

one and a half eggs per person; Connecticut-fresh eggs are available year round
cayenne pepper; curry powder
ketchup—many Vermonters insist on this
mustard; olives, finely chopped; paprika
relish
salt and pepper
Worcestershire sauce
parsley, finely chopped (optional)

Tools

3- to 8-quart pan with cover
3- to 4-quart mixing bowl
sharp knife
fork

Place eggs in a pan of water to cover. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 12 to 15 minutes, covered. Pour water and eggs into sink at once. Refill the pan with cold water. Whack each egg to break the shell. Place the eggs in cold water. Remove the shells. Cut the eggs in half lengthwise. Remove the yolks, put them in the bowl, and use the fork to mash thoroughly. Add any combination of the suggested seasonings. The key is to use a light hand and have fun with the combination. The mixture should be soft but not runny. Fill the whites with the mixture, and sprinkle with paprika or garnish with parsley.

Unbeatable Guacamole Spread

Mary Lou Costanzo's favorite tournament memory? How about when she asked her husband-to-be, Walter, in the early days of their relationship, to join her for some music at a New Haven nightclub? To her surprise, he unglued himself from the front of the tube at halftime of the 1980 men's final to join her. That game wasn't Louisville's last national championship, but it was possibly the last time Mary Lou was able to distract Walter from March Madness.

Ingredients

three ripe Haas avocados, peeled, seeded, and cut in pieces
½ large red onion, chopped or diced
one medium tomato, diced
5 or 6 tablespoons chopped cilantro
juice of one or two lemons—depending on juiciness and on how soupy you want the dip
salt and pepper to taste

Tools

sharp knife
mixing bowl
fork for mashing avocado
blender or food processor (optional)

Put everything in a bowl. Use the fork to mash the avocados until they have the consistency and texture you prefer. For chunky dip, leave pieces of avocado unmashed. If you like *really* smooth guacamole, put the ingredients in the blender or food processor and run it for a few seconds. Serve with tortilla chips or spread on thin slices of baguette. Insist on Connecticut-grown tomatoes, onions, and herbs when they are in season.

NCAA and Sports Wagering

During March Madness, even infrequent gamblers put some money into play in office pools, “friendly” wagers, online gambling sites, or with a convenient bookie. Everybody seems to know where to place a bet at tournament time. For most folks, wagering a few dollars is part of the fun of competing against friends for mastery of “bracketology”: the quest to pick the most winners in the 64-game men’s and/or women’s tournaments.

Gambling exists on a spectrum with low-stakes office pools and friendly wagers at one end and the world of organized crime on the other. Sometimes the two are closer than people may think, and the proximity can have serious consequences for student athletes, their teams, and their universities.

Says a former Arizona State basketball player who agreed to shave points to “wash” a \$10,000 gambling debt: “Having been there, I can tell you how easily players can be drawn into fixing games. Poor naive teenagers plus rich, greedy gamblers equals disaster.”

As Connecticut’s Division I schools strengthen their basketball programs, interest in wagering on their games increases, drawing the attention of gamblers and sports agents; gamblers passing themselves off as sports agents; bookies, including student bookies; members of organized crime, and a host of wannabes looking for a betting advantage. Bars, restaurants, and clubs where players hang out can become the meeting grounds for athletes and those who hope to exploit them. Add alcohol and other drugs, and the job of exploitation gets easier.

In the NCAA publication *Don’t Bet on It*, Mike Welch of the FBI Organized Crime Unit says, “There’s no more vulnerable person in the world of sports than the college athlete. If organized crime senses an opportunity to make money on a college campus, it can be there overnight. Most student bookies, even if they don’t know it, are working for organized crime. ... There is one thing that organized crime is interested in above all: money.”

In 2000, Coach Jim Calhoun told Congress “the threat of scandal to our kids must be reduced.” The NCAA takes the threat seriously and has worked hard with coaches, administrators, and law enforcement to educate student athletes, athletic departments, and college administrators. Its policies on gambling by student athletes are clear: “You may not place any bet of any sort on any college or professional sports event. You may not give information to anyone who does place bets on college or professional sports.”

According to a 2004 NCAA survey, 4.4 percent of Division 1 basketball players either committed serious violations such as taking money for playing poorly or knew a teammate who did. This year, the NCAA is partnering with the FBI to speak with every team in the men’s and women’s Sweet Sixteens. Their message to student athletes is simple and clear:

- Sports wagering threatens your personal integrity and safety.
- It corrupts sports.
- It is illegal.
- It attracts organized crime.

How You Can Help

- Think twice before you bet on college basketball, especially when the bets are illegal.
- Don’t encourage student athletes to place bets of any sort on any college or professional sports event.
- Don’t ask players for inside information about injuries, team morale, discipline problems, or anything else that may bear on the outcome of a game.
- Don’t repeat inside information to anyone who does place bets on college or professional sports.
- Read Don’t Bet on It, the NCAA guide for student athletes, at www.ncaa.org/gambling/dontbetonit/2004.pdf

Connecticut-Grown Apple and Hoops Pie

Joanne Varga prefers Connecticut-grown produce. “For this recipe, I use apples from Bluejay Orchards in Bethel or Lyman Orchards in Middlefield,” she says.

Pastry—makes two crusts

Ingredients

2 cups all purpose flour; ½ teaspoon salt
12 tablespoons—1½ sticks—unsalted butter
3 tablespoons chilled vegetable shortening
¼ cup ice water

Tools

medium-sized mixing bowl
table knife
pastry cutter
measuring spoons

Mix flour and salt in the bowl. Cut butter into pieces, and add butter and shortening. Use the pastry cutter to cut the butter and shortening into the flour until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Add ice water, and work with hands until dough comes together. If the dough is still crumbly, add more ice water—up to 4 more tablespoons—1 tablespoon at a time. Do not overwork. Divide the dough in half, and flatten halves into disks. Wrap separately in plastic wrap, and refrigerate at least one hour.

Pie

Ingredients

5 pounds firm, tart, Connecticut-grown apples, such as Macintosh, Cortland, Fuji, or Granny Smith
½ cup sugar
pinch of nutmeg
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon lemon zest
2 tablespoons cold, unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
one egg

Tools

fruit and vegetable peeler
sharp knife
large mixing bowl
rolling pin
pastry cloth or extra-clean work surface
large baking sheet
small bowl
table fork or whisk
pastry brush

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Peel, core, and slice the apples into the mixing bowl. Add sugar, spices, and zest. Mix well. Lightly flour pastry cloth or work surface. Roll pastry into a circle, and place on cookie sheet. Mound the apples high in the center of the dough. Top with the pieces of butter. Pull the sides of the dough over the apple mixture. Moisten the edges with a bit of water, and crimp to seal. Beat an egg in a small bowl, and brush on the top crust. Sprinkle the crust with sugar. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes, until the crust is slightly brown. Serves six to eight.

Couch Potato Kugel

Annie Chittenden of Madison wouldn't think of watching the tournament without the comfort of an old pair of Converse All Stars and bowl of warm kugel to calm the nerves. Her favorite March Madness memory: "When my husband limited himself to one helping."

Ingredients

one large sweet onion; four medium potatoes
three Connecticut-fresh eggs
1½ teaspoons salt; ½ teaspoon pepper
fresh or dried parsley and/or basil to taste
¼ cup melted butter
butter for greasing baking dish
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1/3 cup grated hard cheese (optional)

Tools

sharp knife
8-inch square baking pan
4-quart mixing bowl
grater or food processor
vegetable scrub brush
measuring cups, liquid and dry
small mixing bowl
whisk
measuring spoons

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease the baking pan. Quarter the onion and grate coarsely, or use the food processor shredder blade. Place the onion in the large mixing bowl. Scrub potatoes and grate. Add potatoes to onions and add grated cheese, if desired. Toss lightly with fingers, and set aside. In the small bowl, whisk the eggs. Add seasonings, melted butter, and flour, and whisk until smooth. Pour the egg mixture over the onion and potato mixture, and fold gently until lightly mixed. Pour into the greased baking pan, and bake for one hour. Serves six.

Crusader Chicken Chili

Jim Wuelfing is a former associate dean and graduate of Holy Cross, the last New England school to win an NCAA basketball championship until the Calhoun era. Jim's favorite tournament memory is yet to come. Go Crusaders! Check out the Connecticut Poultry Association's online buyer's guide:

<http://web.uconn.edu/poultry/CPA/Buyers%20Guide%202005.html>.

Ingredients

nonstick cooking spray

1 pound chicken breast, cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pieces

1 cup coarsely chopped onion

one can (about 15 ounces) Great Northern beans, rinsed and drained

one can (about 15 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained

one can (about 14 ounces) Mexican-style stewed tomatoes, undrained

2 tablespoons Texas-style chili powder seasoning mix

Tools

4- to 6-quart saucepan

stirring spoon

Spray saucepan with cooking spray; heat over medium heat until hot. Add chicken and onion; cook and stir over medium to medium-high heat five to eight minutes or until chicken is browned. Stir beans, tomatoes with juice, and seasoning mix into saucepan; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes uncovered. This delicious chili is excellent served over cooked rice or pasta.

Double-Team Chowder With Corn and Cheddar Cheese

The eldest of Joanne Varga's three sons is a UConn student. "We are *all* avid fans of NCAA basketball," she says. "One of my favorite memories? The UConn men versus the Duke Blue Devils in the finals of the 1999 NCAA Tournament. Most analysts had UConn as the underdogs. Boy, did we ever prove them wrong!"

Ingredients

8 ounces bacon, chopped; ¼ cup olive oil
four large yellow onions, chopped; 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ cup all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons kosher salt; 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
12 cups chicken stock
2 pounds unpeeled white boiling potatoes, cut into a medium dice
10 cups fresh corn kernels—about ten ears
2 cups half-and-half cream; support your local dairy
½ pound sharp white cheddar cheese, grated

Tools

sharp knife; large soup pot
slotted spoon; measuring cups, dry and liquid
measuring spoons
pan for blanching corn

In the soup pot, cook bacon in olive oil on medium-high heat until bacon is crisp, about five minutes. Remove bacon with a slotted spoon and reserve. Reduce heat to medium. Add onions and butter to the fat, and cook for ten minutes, until the onions are translucent. Stir in the flour, salt, and pepper, and cook, stirring, for three minutes. Add the chicken stock and potatoes. Bring to a boil, and simmer uncovered for 15 minutes, until the potatoes are tender. Cut the corn off the cobs, and blanch the kernels for three minutes in boiling salted water. Drain. Add the corn, the cream, and the cheese to the soup. Cook for five more minutes, until the cheese is melted. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Crumble the reserved bacon to use as a garnish. Serves ten to 12.

‘Dukies Bite the Apple’ Crisp

Helen Benson, a long-time resident of Connecticut, is passionate about watching the Huskies and often entertains during March Madness. “One of my favorite memories is when the UConn men won the 1999 championship with a 3-point victory over Duke,” she says. “Nothing tastes better at these events than ‘Dukies Bite the Apple’ Crisp. Enjoy.”

Ingredients

½ cup all-purpose flour

¼ cup granulated sugar; ¼ cup packed light brown sugar

¼ cup chilled butter, cut into small pieces

3 tablespoons toasted, slivered almonds

7 cups peeled, sliced, Connecticut-grown Granny Smith apples, about 3 pounds

1/3 cup amaretto (almond-flavored liqueur) or Connecticut-made apple juice

Tools

mixing spoon

measuring cups, dry and liquid

measuring spoons

4-quart mixing bowl

pastry cutter or two table knives

8-inch square baking dish or 1½-quart casserole dish

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly spoon the flour into a ½-cup dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Combine the flour and sugars in a bowl; cut in the butter with a pastry cutter or two knives until the mixture is crumbly. Add the almonds, and toss well. Combine the apples and the amaretto in a bowl; toss well. Spoon the apple mixture into the baking dish. Sprinkle with crumb mixture. Bake for 45 minutes or until golden brown. Serves nine.

Fighting-Irish Corned Beef Reuben

Mike Norton, a problem-gambling therapist at Torrington's McCall Foundation, writes: "What goes together with March Madness and the hungry, sometimes rabid, college basketball fans I know? Many of us are Irish by birth, and the rest *become* Irish by decree—at least during March. Obviously, we'll need a good Irish recipe. The corned beef should be homemade, preferably left over from St. Patty's Day. If you're gonna use deli slices, please stop here and make yourself a PB&J."

Serves four; adjust accordingly for bigger crowds or bigger eaters.

Reuben Dressing

1/3 cup mayonnaise

1½ tablespoons ketchup

1½ teaspoons horseradish or more for extra kick

½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

salt and pepper to taste

Sandwich

2 tablespoons butter, softened

eight slices fresh rye bread, thickly sliced

eight slices Swiss cheese with large holes

1 pound corned beef brisket, thinly sliced; ask for Connecticut-grown beef

½ pound sauerkraut

Butter one side of the bread slices and place buttered-side down on waxed paper. Place one slice of Swiss cheese on each slice of bread. Lay about an 1/8 of a pound of corned beef on each slice. Spread a heaping serving of sauerkraut on each one. Top with reuben dressing. Add another 1/8 of a pound of corned beef and another slice of cheese. Top with remaining slices of bread, buttered-side up. Preheat griddle or fry pan to medium heat. Cook the sandwiches on one side until golden brown. Flip and brown the other side. Serve with a side of your favorite chips or coleslaw or both!

Full-Court Armenian Pizzas

Barbara Raimundo is a counselor at Problem Gambling Services who specializes in helping families survive the gambling problems of loved ones. Her four sons, their families, and her husband have hearty appetites for good basketball and good food, so she's an old hand at breaking full-kitchen pressure. This recipe makes enough crowd-pleasing flat bread pizzas to feed a cheering section for the finals or a few troops game after game after game. Contact the Connecticut Sheep Breeders Association to find Connecticut-grown lamb.

Ingredients

1½ pounds ground lamb
one 1-pound can of peeled, chopped tomatoes
one 6-ounce can tomato paste
two large onions, chopped
one green pepper, chopped
half a bunch of parsley, finely chopped
three cloves garlic, finely chopped
juice of one lemon
1 tablespoon paprika
dash of cayenne pepper
salt and pepper to taste
18 small Syrian pita breads

Tools

sharp knife
large mixing bowl
mixing spoon

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Split pitas carefully, and set aside. Combine all ingredients in bowl, and mix thoroughly. Spread mixture evenly on split pitas. Bake 15 minutes. You can make the pizzas ahead of time, freeze, and reheat at game time. Makes 36 pizzas.

Geno's Philly Cheesesteak Sandwich

Thank you, Philly, for giving us a couple of classics: Coach Geno and the cheesesteak sandwich. What could be better than watching Geno patrol the sidelines at the women's finals with a juicy cheesesteak on your plate? One recommendation: drop the word *hoagie* in favor of the Connecticut classic *grinder*.

Philly Steak Seasoning

Combine 4 tablespoons kosher salt, 1 tablespoon freshly cracked pepper, and 1 teaspoon garlic powder in container with a tight-fitting lid. Shake well.

Ingredients per Sandwich

1 tablespoon vegetable oil; 2 ounces diced onion;
2 ounces sliced mushrooms;
2 ounces green pepper, sliced on the diagonal
1 teaspoon Philly steak seasoning
6 ounces rib-eye steak, thinly shaved—ask the butcher to do this
three slices provolone or American cheese or Cheez Whiz
one soft 8-inch hoagie or Italian roll, split

Tools

griddle or skillet; two slotted spatulas; ovenproof dish with cover

Set the griddle over medium-high heat, and add half the oil. When the griddle is hot, add the onions, mushrooms, peppers, and ½ teaspoon steak seasoning. Cook, turning constantly, until the vegetables are cooked through, about five minutes. Remove from the griddle, and place in heated dish. Add remaining vegetable oil and shaved steak to the hot griddle. Season with remaining seasoning mix. Using two spatulas, begin to chop meat into small pieces about the size of a dime, turning rapidly. Add the vegetables, and mix. Push the mixture into a roll shape, and layer the sliced cheese over the mixture. (If you use Cheez Whiz, smear it on the roll now.) When the cheese is slightly melted, hold the roll over the meat, slide a spatula under the meat mixture, scoop it into the roll, and serve.

Ma Jones's Division I Macaroni and Cheese

Charlie Jones, the athletic director at Central Connecticut State University, says, "Ma Jones passed this recipe to my wife, Linda, and it is a big hit all year long. If you love cheesy macaroni, this is it! The next best thing is the food at the Final Four: crawfish in New Orleans, salmon in Seattle, or ribs in St. Louis." Charlie has "before and after" favorite tournament memories. From the time before Central became a Division I school, Charlie recalls Bill Walton's almost flawless performance—21 of 22 shots made from the field—for UCLA in the 1973 title game against Memphis State. From Central's Division I years: "Any time the Blue Devils make the Big Dance."

Ingredients

2 to 3 pounds yellow cheddar cheese, cut into ½- to 1-inch pieces
one can evaporated milk
three Connecticut-fresh eggs, beaten
one stick butter
1 to 1½ pounds elbow macaroni

Tools

soup pan or other large pot
colander
mixing spoon
baking dish, well greased

Cook macaroni according to package directions. Drain macaroni. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Put the butter into the empty pot while it's still warm, and melt the butter. After macaroni is well drained, return to the pot. Stir to coat macaroni well with butter. Mix in three-quarters of a can of evaporated milk. Add three-quarters of the cheeses. Blend eggs into mixture. Turn into the baking dish. Scatter the rest of the cheese and pour the rest of the milk over the top of the mixture. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes. Do not let it burn—when it's bubbly, it's ready. Serves four to six.

Potato and Roasted Garlic Soup

Jiri Krejcir is the owner and chef at the White Peach in Gaylordsville, a “natural, New England country restaurant” that uses classic preparation techniques for a menu based on organic ingredients. Follow his example and buy Connecticut-fresh produce and dairy products.

Ingredients

ten cloves garlic, unpeeled
1 tablespoon olive oil
six to eight medium potatoes, peeled
one small onion, diced
2 quarts chicken or vegetable stock
1 pint heavy cream
pinch nutmeg
salt and ground white pepper to taste
dill, chives or parsley (optional)

Tools

large soup pot
small bowl
blender

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Rub the garlic cloves with olive oil, and roast them until tender and golden. Cool and squeeze the soft garlic into a bowl. Add the potatoes, diced onion, and stock to the pot, and boil until the potatoes are soft and falling apart. Remove from heat. Add the cream, garlic, and nutmeg to the potato mixture, and puree in a blender until smooth. Return to the pot. Adjust the seasoning with salt and white pepper—several tablespoons of salt may be required, depending on the seasoning of the stock and the number of potatoes used. Add fresh dill, chives, or parsley if desired. Serve hot or chilled. Serves four to eight.

Prime Time Jerk Chicken Pasta Salad

Carol Meredith is assistant director of Prevention Services at DMHAS. Carol and her husband, a native of Jamaica, love good food. Watching the tournament doesn't give them much time for more-complicated dishes, but this one is immensely satisfying and holds up nicely for a weekend of basketball. Carol recommends Walkerswood jerk sauce and Cardini's balsamic vinaigrette.

Ingredients

four boneless chicken breasts
3 tablespoons Jamaican jerk sauce*
three cloves garlic, chopped or pressed
1/3 cup balsamic vinegar
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
one 12-ounce box bowtie pasta
fresh broccoli, zucchini, carrots, red peppers, yellow peppers,
green peppers—anything you like! Plenty of Connecticut-grown
vegetables are available year round.
1 to 2 tablespoons olive oil
one 12-ounce bottle balsamic vinaigrette

Tools

two large mixing bowls
sharp knife
broiling pans
large pasta pot
colander

Combine chicken, jerk sauce, garlic, vinegar, salt, and pepper in a bowl. Marinate in the refrigerator overnight. Grill the chicken outdoors over charcoal or broil in the oven until tender. Slice to desired length, and set aside. Prepare pasta according to package directions. Drain and place in the other bowl. Chop the vegetables to the desired size, toss in olive oil, turn into broiling pan, and broil for about 15 minutes or to desired texture. Toss chicken, pasta, and vegetables with the vinaigrette. Serve cold or at room temperature. Serves four to six.

Randy Smith's Opening Rounds Clam Chowder

Randy, a sportswriter for the Manchester *Journal Inquirer* since 1971, has been in the press box for more than 1,000 UConn men's and women's basketball games. Not surprisingly, he has more than one favorite tournament memory: Tate George's shot at the buzzer to propel the Huskies over Clemson and into the Elite Eight, and Jen Rizzotti's execution of a perfect crossover dribble against Tennessee's Michelle Marciniak to seal Connecticut's first national championship in the 1995 title game. Randy says this chowder is "good on day one, better on day two, best on day three," making it the perfect dish for opening weekend of the tournament.

Ingredients

20 to 25 Connecticut-grown cherrystone clams
1 pound salt pork, chopped
one baseball-sized onion, coarsely chopped
three or four medium potatoes, peeled or unpeeled and cubed
2 cups fresh cream and 2 cups whole milk, or 4 cups half and half

Tools

steamer
large soup pan

Steam cherrystones and save broth; remove clams from shells. Sauté salt pork for 45 minutes to an hour over low heat. Remove from the pan, and set aside. Add onion to the pan, and cook until translucent. Add potatoes and reserved broth; cook until potatoes are soft. Add clams and milk and cream or half and half. Cook for ten minutes—do not let the mixture boil—and remove from heat. Add salt pork; let stand for one hour. Serves four to six.

Taste of Victory Vegetable Soup With Lentils

Barbara Spallone, the administrative assistant at Problem Gambling Services, likes the ease of making this hearty soup. It's a comfort food designed to soothe the sting of defeat or calm nerves during a close game. Using Connecticut-grown herbs and vegetables makes it even tastier.

Ingredients

1 cup lentils
4½ cups of water
four packets chicken or vegetable bouillon
one can crushed tomatoes
two stalks celery, chopped
one medium sweet potato, diced
one large onion, chopped
four medium carrots, chopped
three large cloves garlic, minced
two bay leaves
¼ cup fresh parsley, minced
½ teaspoon thyme
½ teaspoon oregano
salt and black pepper to taste.

Tools

large soup or sauce pan, with cover
measuring spoons
blender

Add lentils, water, and bouillon to the pan. Bring to a boil. Add the rest of the ingredients, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Adjust the seasonings. Thin the soup with a bit of water, if desired. Remove the bay leaves, puree half the mixture in the blender, and add to the rest of soup to thicken. Serves four or five.

Cream of the Crop: Homegrown Basketball Players

Nothing compares to the excitement of high school basketball. Even a stadium crowd of 60,000 screaming fans can't always match the electricity a few hundred scholastic hoops fans jammed into a hat box-sized gym generate. Maybe it's because people take the games more personally when the kids represent their towns and their schools.

In the spirit of Connecticut-grown, the Problem Gambling Services March Madness Top-Five Committee surveyed long-time coaches, sportswriters, and a basketball official or two, people who have been professionally involved in scholastic basketball for at least 20 years to chose the five best male and female hoopsters of all time.

Our experts included former Southern Connecticut State University coach and associate athletic director Louise Albrecht; Charles Bentley, legendary basketball coach at Harding High; long-time basketball official Tony Candido; Owen Canfield, sports columnist for *The Hartford Courant*; George "the Coach" DeMaio, WELI sports director; Marge Dolan, athletic director at Branford High; Bart Fisher of Central Connecticut State University and the former *New Britain Herald* sports editor; Lee Franzman, chair, Nominating Committee, Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame; Charles Jones, athletic director at CCSU; Joe LaRosa, former sportswriter for the *New Britain Herald*; Rick Leddy of SCSU; former Sheehan High athletic director Judy Samaha; Randy Smith, sports editor for the *Journal Inquirer*; Hubie Williamson, founder of the Pearl Street/Derwin-McInerney Summer Basketball League; and Linda Wooster, associate director of athletics and recreation at Quinnipiac University.

We gave our consultants only one criterion on which to base their choices: an athlete had to have played scholastic basketball for a Connecticut high school. Other than that, the experts created their own measuring sticks. Some chose players who made it to the professional ranks or had brilliant college careers. Others considered players' lifetime impact on the sport. Some made their selections based solely on scholastic basketball achievements.

Men's Top Five

Calvin Murphy, Norwalk High School
John Williamson, Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven
Vin Baker, Old Saybrook High School
Rod Foster, St. Thomas Aquinas, New Britain
Charles Smith, Harding High School, Bridgeport

Other top vote getters: Johnny Egan, Mike Gminksi, Walter Luckett, and Corny Thompson.

In the minds of our experts, Calvin Murphy is in a class by himself, widely regarded as the best male basketball player Connecticut ever produced. Twice an All-American at Norwalk High School, the 5-foot, 9-inch Murphy went on to earn collegiate All-American honors three times during his career at Niagara University, where he averaged 33.1 points per game. He remains the fourth all-time leading scorer in college basketball history behind Pete Maravich, Austin Carr, and Oscar Robertson. His 68 points against Syracuse is the third-highest single game total against a Division I opponent. With the NBA Houston Rockets from 1970 to 1983, Murphy produced 17.9 points per game. In addition, his career total of 17,949 points had been the team's best until Hakeem Olajuwon passed him.

Next is John Williamson, who averaged close to 40 points per game during his senior year in high school. An All-American at New Mexico State, he moved on to the New York Nets, one of only four ABA-era Nets to have a jersey retired.

Rod Foster, a standout at St. Thomas Aquinas, was a four-year starter at UCLA and one of the speediest players in the nation. With Rod on the team, UCLA made it to the NCAA finals in 1980. An accident cut his NBA career short after only three years.

Sports Illustrated called Vin Baker “America’s best-kept secret” when the 6-foot, 11-inch forward developed into an exceptional player at the University of Hartford. Selected eighth in the NBA draft, Vin became an All-Star in his second season and was a four-time All-Star during his 12-year pro career.

An outstanding power forward, Charles Smith led the University of Pittsburgh to national prominence. A former Big East Player of the Year, Smith was a number-three pick in the NBA draft and went on to play nine years in the pros.

Women’s Top Five

Nykesha Sales, Bloomfield High School
Tracy Lis, Killingly High School
Jennifer Rizzotti, New Fairfield High School
Tracy Claxton, Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven
Mary Anne O’Connor, Notre Dame High School, Fairfield

Other top vote getters: Joan Bonvicini, Beth Chandler, Maria Conlon, Donna Fiedorowicz, Cathy Inglese, Joan Joyce, Hope Lithicum, and Jody Rajcula.

On the women’s side, four players finished in a dead heat. Nykesha Sales starred at Bloomfield High, where she was the USA Today National High School Player of the Year before emerging as one of the nation’s best Division I players. At UConn, she twice earned All-American honors and a host of other tributes. She is a perennial WNBA All-Star.

Tracy Lis held five national high school scoring records. A 1988 Killingly High grad, she scored 3,681 points during her career, still the national high school record. She also holds third place in Big East career scoring.

Jen Rizzotti, a two-time All- American, helped lead the UConn Huskies to the 1995 national title. The following year, she earned Big East and Associated Press National Player of the Year honors. Rizzotti played eight seasons of professional ball before becoming the winningest coach in University of Hartford history. She is one of the few female athletes ever to make the cover of *Sports Illustrated*.

Tracy Claxton led Wilbur Cross High School to three Class L titles and a 54-game winning streak before going on to a stellar career at Old Dominion University. A two-time All-American, she won a national championship while at ODU, picking up Most Valuable Player awards in both the 1985 Sun Belt Conference Tournament and the NCAA Final Four.

Not far behind is Fairfield's Mary Anne O'Connor, who had an outstanding college career with Southern Connecticut State University in the 1970s. She was named to the U.S. National team in 1974, 1975, and 1976. O'Connor and the American team won the silver medal at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal.

All-American Italian Sausage and Peppers

Members of the Problem Gambling Services March Madness Appetite Enhancement Committee devised this recipe. According to them, it's so good, you won't care if your team bows out in the round of 64.

Ingredients

3 pounds hot or sweet Italian sausage—try the store-made variety from a local Italian grocery
¾ to 1 cup olive oil
three green bell peppers and two or three red ones, cored and sliced into ¾-inch-wide strips
one very large yellow onion, sliced
four or more cloves of garlic
½ cup red wine vinegar
½ teaspoon dried oregano
1 to 3 cups Italian tomato sauce

Tools

sharp knife
large ovenproof casserole or Dutch oven
large skillet
liquid measuring cups
measuring spoons

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut sausage into 2- to 4-inch pieces, and place in the casserole with ¼ to ½ cup olive oil. Bake 30 to 40 minutes, turning frequently to ensure browning on all sides. Set the skillet over medium-high heat, and add peppers, onions, garlic, and ½ cup of oil. Cook, stirring frequently. Peppers need to fry and not steam. When the peppers are soft and the surface has a mixed green and golden color, add red wine vinegar and oregano. Stir in tomato sauce, add sausage, and cook for ten minutes on medium-low until flavors have blended. Serve with a green salad. Serves six to eight.

Bounceless Meat Balls

The only dribble here is down your chin as you chomp on these real Italian meatballs. We almost guarantee that even basketball's Genos and Jens and Pitinos will give them the green light when served with a little red sauce over pasta or on a grinder roll. Makes one basketball-sized or 25 to 30 normal-sized meatballs. If you make a basketball-sized meatball, be sure to carve "Spalding" into the surface, take a picture, and send it to us for next year's cookbook.

Ingredients

3 pounds ground beef, not too lean, or 1 pound each of ground beef, pork, and veal
¾ to 1 cup grated parmesan, Romano, or other hard Italian grating cheese
three to four cloves garlic, minced
5 tablespoons fresh parsley, finely chopped
1 to 2 tablespoons fennel seeds
1½ to 2 cups Italian-style bread crumbs
five eggs
salt and pepper to taste
one large yellow or white onion, finely chopped (optional)
basil or oregano? Fuggedahboudit!
olive oil for baking pan

Tools

4- to 6-quart mixing bowl
9- by 12-inch baking pan, lightly oiled

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Combine all ingredients by hand until well blended. The meat should be neither too dry nor too mushy and hold its shape when formed into balls. Correct with bread crumbs if too moist or add an egg if too dry. Form into balls somewhat smaller than a baseball and a bit larger than a golf ball. Place in a single layer in a lightly oiled baking pan. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until one side is browned. Turn and continue baking for another 15 to 20 minutes or until cooked through.

Citrus-Marinated London Broil

Joe Dos Santos, a native of Brazil, shares this recipe from his rural home town of Luz. Although Joe prefers soccer to hoops, his wife, Robin, is an avid UConn women's basketball fan. The team's victory over Tennessee to claim the 1995 national championship at the end of its first undefeated season—35-0—remains her favorite NCAA Tournament memory.

Ingredients

four cloves garlic, finely chopped
one medium yellow onion, finely chopped
freshly squeezed juice of two limes or lemons
½ cup vinegar
½ tsp dried rosemary leaves
2 tablespoons olive oil
one 3-pound London broil; look for tasty, tender Connecticut-grown beef
salt to taste

Tools

mixing bowl
mixing spoon or whisk
dish to hold the meat

Mix marinade ingredients, except salt; pour over London broil; and sprinkle with salt to taste. Marinate at least two hours. Broil indoors or on an outside grill. Serves six to 12.

Defensively Delicious Roasted Vegetables

This simply delectable winter dish, which comes courtesy of the Connecticut Agricultural Business Cluster, is a great zone defense: defends your mid-zone from offensive fats and cholesterol. It is especially good when made with Connecticut-grown veggies, such as hardy winter squash and local herbs.

Ingredients

2 pounds winter squash, such as butternut
two red or green bell peppers
one sweet potato, peeled
three Yukon gold potatoes, peeled
one red onion
carrots and/or parsnips
1 tablespoon fresh thyme, chopped
2 fresh rosemary, chopped
¼ cup olive oil
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
salt and pepper to taste

Tools

sharp knife
large roasting pan(s)
large mixing bowl
small bowl
measuring spoons

Preheat oven to 475 degrees. Cut the vegetables into 1-inch cubes or slices. Cut the onion in half and each half into four wedges and separate. Put vegetables in large mixing bowl. In the small bowl, combine thyme, rosemary, olive oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Toss with vegetables to coat well. Scatter the vegetables in a single layer(s) in pan(s). Roast for 35 to 40 minutes, stirring every ten minutes, until vegetables are cooked through and browned. Note: Use any combination of vegetables you like and whatever herbs you have on hand.

Fighting-Irish Turnovers

Kathleen White's eight brothers and sisters are fans of all things Notre Dame, and pasties, a turnover-style beef pie, are required eating for any Notre Dame event. "Try Connecticut-raised beef," she says. "It can go one-on-one with Montana beef any time."

Ingredients

pastry—use your favorite two-crust recipe or mix. Shape into six balls, cover, and place in refrigerator.

1½ pounds round steak, trimmed of fat and cut into ¾-inch cubes
three medium-sized baking potatoes, peeled and cut into ¾-inch cubes

one large yellow onion, cut into ½-inch dice

salt and freshly ground pepper; flour; butter

6 tablespoons beef broth

Tools

large bowl; rolling pin; pastry cloth or super-clean work surface
table fork; sharp knife; baking sheets; measuring spoons

Preheat oven to 350. Combine meat, potatoes, and onions in the bowl. Salt and pepper generously. Mix. Lightly dust the pastry cloth or work surface with flour. Roll one of the pastry balls into a slightly oblong shape. Mound about one-sixth of the meat mixture into the lower half of the oblong. Set a pat of butter on top. Pull the top of the pastry over the mound, moisten the edges with a bit of water, and press the edges of both halves firmly together. You don't want the pasties to leak. Crimp the edges with a fork, or roll and pinch together with your fingers. Cut two slits in the top of the pastry. Slide a spatula under it, and set it on a baking sheet. Make the rest of the pasties. Don't crowd the baking sheets; use as many as you need. Bake 50 to 60 minutes or until pasties are light brown. Ten minutes before they are done, spoon a tablespoon of broth into each pastry through one of the top slits. Serve hot, cold, or at room temperature. Serves six.

Game-Stealing Broccoli Rabe and Sausage

Chef Tomaso Prozano, a big fan of Connecticut-grown meats and produce, owns the Cantina Restaurant in Middletown. This dish is a slam-dunk to make and hearty enough to sustain the most determined fans through a long March Madness weekend. Support your local Italian grocer, and try the store-made sausage.

Ingredients

two 16-ounce bunches broccoli rabe, tough stems ends removed
¼ cup olive oil
four to five cloves garlic, minced or pressed
2 pounds Italian sausage, sweet, hot or both
2 ounces white cooking wine
1 cup chicken bouillon or meat stock

Tools

sharp knife
large ovenproof skillet
vegetable steamer

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Cut sausage into 2- to 3-inch pieces. Add oil and garlic to the skillet, and sauté over low heat. Add sausage, and cook over medium heat for about 15 minutes, turning frequently. Steam broccoli rabe for about five minutes—it should be bright green and al dente. Drain. Add broccoli, cooking wine, and stock to skillet. Bake for ten minutes. Remove from the oven, and allow to rest for five minutes. Serve with crusty Italian or French bread. Serves four to eight.

Husky Pulled Pork

Cheryl Molina directs the Better Choice gambling treatment program at United Community and Family Services in Norwich. Her oldest son was a redshirt walk-on for the 2006 UConn football team.

Ingredients

2 pounds boneless pork ribs or a 2-pound pork roast, trimmed of excess fat
one can Coke or sugar-free Coke
1 cup ketchup
one jar Husky salsa—hot or mild
½ cup Worcestershire sauce
½ cup corn syrup
½ cup barbecue sauce—A number of good barbecue sauces are made right here in Connecticut.
1/8 cup yellow mustard
1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon black pepper
one chopped onion
½ cup water

Tools

electric slow cooker
platter for meat
two table forks

Put all the ingredients into the cooker, and cook on low about six to eight hours. Remove the meat from the cooker, and use the forks to pull it apart. Serve with crusty rolls and a salad of baby spinach, feta cheese, dried cranberries, chopped red onion, chopped walnuts, and balsamic vinaigrette. Enjoy!

John Keegan's Dillon Beach Cioppino

Middletown resident and Montana ex-pat Kathleen White is a writer and editor who sometime works with Problem Gambling Services. A serious fan who can get down-right rude when distracted from a televised UConn women's basketball game, she says, "The clams at Dillon Beach are as big as basketballs. Make this fish stew with Connecticut-grown hard-shell clams instead."

Ingredients

8 tablespoons olive oil
one large onion, coarsely chopped; four cloves garlic, minced
4 tablespoons parsley, chopped; 1 cup white cooking wine
two 11-ounce cans whole tomatoes;
two 8-ounce cans tomato sauce
pinch of thyme; salt and pepper to taste
2 cups hot water
3 pounds red snapper
1 pound raw clams in the shell
four lobster tails, each chopped into three pieces, or two cooked
Dungeness crab, broken into pieces
1 pound sea scallops; 2 pounds raw shrimp, peeled and deveined

Tools

large soup pot
stirring spoon
soup ladle

Sauté onion in olive oil until golden brown. Add garlic and parsley, and cook five minutes. Add cooking wine and stir. Drain and chop the tomatoes. Save the juice. Add the tomatoes and juice, tomato sauce, and seasonings. Simmer uncovered for 15 minutes. Add the hot water. Let stand at least six hours. Bring the sauce to a boil. Fifteen minutes before serving, add the red snapper, clams, and lobster. If using crab, add it with the six-minute fish. Six minutes before serving, add the scallops and shrimp. Ladle into bowls, and serve immediately with lots of sourdough bread. Serves six to eight.

Midnight-Madness Roast Turkey

WPLR radio personality “Stumpy,” a.k.a. Ron Fiorella, says, “Because it cooks slowly overnight, this turkey remains juicy and succulent. Don’t insult your turkey with some inferior Italian in-name-only sausage; get a nice, sweet, store-made sausage from the Italian grocery.” Stumpy’s favorite tournament memory: “When I stopped gambling, I could root for my favorite team as opposed to the team I *needed* to win. The bird goes into the oven 12 to 14 hours before those other turkeys take the court.”

Ingredients

stuffing mix—check package to determine how much you need per pound of turkey
Italian sausage (optional)
chopped apple, onion, celery (optional)
raisins (optional)
sage (optional)
13- to 35-pound fresh or defrosted turkey
salt and pepper (optional)

Tools

roasting pan
heavy-duty aluminum foil

Prepare stuffing according to package directions. Add other ingredients if desired. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Remove the pouch of parts from the turkey, wash it thoroughly inside and out under cold running water, pat dry with paper towels, and season inside and out with salt and pepper, if desired. Stuff the turkey. Wrap the turkey tightly in foil. Pop it into the oven, and reduce the heat to 200 degrees. Go to bed. About 90 minutes before serving, remove the turkey from the oven, remove foil, and turn the heat up to 400 degrees. Return the bird to the oven and brown for about an hour. Use a meat thermometer to test for doneness—the internal temperature should be 180 degrees F in the leg, and at least 165 degrees F in the breast. Remove from oven. Let rest for about 30 minutes. Serve and enjoy.

No Time Out Tomato Sauce

Barbara Spallone's all-tournament tomato sauce recipe will get you out of the kitchen before Geno takes his jacket off. It goes well with any pasta and is great to have on hand, especially when ravenous fans crowd into your TV room.

Ingredients

one medium onion, chopped
olive oil to cover the bottom of the pan
three small cans tomato paste
two 28-ounce cans tomato puree; two cans water
two bay leaves, broken in half
1 teaspoon oregano
salt and pepper to taste
garlic powder to taste
dried basil to taste
12 or more Bounceless Meatballs (page 39), browned

Tools

heavy soup pan or skillet

Add onion and olive oil to pan. Sauté over medium-low heat until translucent. Add remaining ingredients. Reduce heat to low, and simmer until the sauce thickens, approximately two hours. Ladle over cooked pasta. Serves a gang; just keep adding meatballs.

Old-Fashioned Butt-Kickin' Chicken and Rice

This is another great recipe from Joe Dos Santos. It's a classic March Madness dish: hearty, satisfying, and easy to prepare well in advance of tip-off. According to local Brazilian legend, this dish tastes best when made with a neighbor's chicken. In Connecticut, it's best when made with homegrown chicken.

Ingredients

2- to 3-pound chicken cut into ten to 12 small pieces.
2 tablespoons olive oil
two cloves garlic, minced; one medium yellow onion, finely chopped
one or two small red chili peppers, finely chopped
½ cup parsley, finely chopped; ½ cup chives, finely chopped
2 cups long-grain rice
2 cups water
salt and pepper to taste

Tools

large, heavy skillet with cover
pan large enough to hold chicken and rice
measuring spoons
stirring spoon or spatula

Brown chicken pieces in olive oil over medium heat. Spoon off half the fat and set aside. Add enough water to cover the chicken pieces. Add half the onion, garlic, pepper, parsley, and chives. Cover and cook over medium-low heat for 30 to 40 minutes. In the second pan, heat 2 tablespoons of the reserved fat over medium heat. Add the rice and sauté, stirring frequently, for five minutes. Make sure all the rice is coated; add more fat if needed. Stir in the remaining vegetables. Add salt and pepper, and cook until vegetables are wilted. Add the chicken pieces and broth. Bring the broth to a boil, and cook for ten minutes. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pan, and cook until the rice is tender, about 25 minutes. If the rice is dry but not yet tender, sprinkle with a little water and continue cooking. Serves six to eight.

Portuguese Pork and Littleneck Clams

According to John Turenne, founder of the Connecticut-based Sustainable Food Systems (sustainablefoodsystems.com), this recipe reflects the style of combining pork and seafood practiced by many descendants of the Azores who settled in the fishing village of Stonington.

Ingredients

four dozen Connecticut-raised littleneck clams
1 pound Portuguese linguica or chourico
1 cup fresh tomatoes, chopped
one medium onion, cut into ¼ inch dice
two cloves garlic, minced
1 cup white cooking wine
water

Tools

scrub brush
sharp knife
large soup or pasta pot
liquid measuring cups

Scrub clams well and rinse. Chop the sausage into ½-inch pieces. Put sausage, tomatoes, onions, garlic, cooking wine, and ¾-cup water into the pot. Place the clams on top, cover, and bring to a simmer. Cook until the clams have opened completely. Discard any that did not open. Divide everything evenly into four soup bowls, and serve with plenty of crusty bread to sop up the broth. Serves four.

Redshirt Shrimp

Tim Madden is a native Nutmegger currently exiled to the Dominion of Dukies. “My wife and I watched the 1999 men’s final in Durham, the only UConn fans in a roomful of Devils,” he says. “My tongue is still bleeding.”

Ingredients

half a stick of butter; ¼-cup olive oil; one large sweet onion, diced
one large shallot, finely diced; salt
6 cups fresh Connecticut-grown tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and
diced. Strain the juice to remove the seeds and save.

OR

6 cups whole, peeled, Cento-brand canned tomatoes. Dice, strain
the juice to remove the seeds, and save.
two to three cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1½ tablespoons dried basil, crushed into a fine powder
1½ teaspoons hot sauce; ½ to 1 teaspoon(s) sugar
1½ pounds fresh or defrosted shrimp, shelled and cleaned
½ cup heavy cream; freshly ground pepper to taste
1½ to 2 pounds perciatelli, linguine, or angel hair pasta

Tools

sharp knife; large heavy-bottomed soup pan or cast-iron skillet
liquid measuring cup(s); measuring spoons
pasta pot; stirring spoon or spatula

Heat pan or skillet over a medium flame. Add butter and olive oil. Stir until butter bubbles. Add onion and shallot. Salt liberally, and cook until translucent. Add tomatoes, garlic, basil, hot sauce, and ½ teaspoon sugar, and salt liberally. Cook about 20 minutes, tasting and stirring frequently. Add more sugar if the tomatoes are too acidic. Thin with reserved tomato juice if desired. When ready to serve, prepare the pasta according to 20 directions. When the pasta is done, reheat the sauce and add shrimp. Cook, stirring frequently, until shrimp is pink, about eight minutes. Do not overcook. Reduce heat, and stir in cream. Add a generous grinding of black pepper. Toss with pasta. Serves six to eight.

Smothered Pork Chops—An Heirloom Recipe

Michel Nischan is a renowned chef, a best-selling cookbook author, and an avid proponent of sustainable farming. He and Paul Newman are partners in the new restaurant on the Westport Country Playhouse grounds, the Dressing Room: A Homegrown Restaurant.

Ingredients

four center cut shoulder pork chops, cut in half
salt and pepper to taste; 2 tablespoons flour
2 tablespoons pork fat—hock stock skimmings, lard, or bacon fat
two medium sliced onions, ¼-inch slices
1 additional tablespoon flour; 3 cups rich ham hock stock

Tools

heavy skillet, large enough to hold chops, with cover
measuring spoons; liquid measuring cups
stirring spoon or spatula; warmed serving platter
whisk

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Set the skillet over medium heat, add the pork fat, and heat. Season each chop with salt and pepper, dredge in flour, and shake off the excess. Place the pork chops in the skillet, and cook until they are well browned on both sides—about four minutes per side. Remove the chops and set aside. Add the sliced onions to the pan, and increase the heat to medium-high. Cook the onions until they are well browned—about six to ten minutes. Sprinkle the onions with the additional flour, and cook two minutes. Add the rich ham hock stock, and simmer until thickened. Return the pork chops to the skillet, making sure the chops are buried in the gravy. Cover the skillet and transfer to the oven. Cook two to three hours or until the chops are tender. Transfer the chops to a warmed serving platter. Tilt the pan so any surface fat collects at one side. Skim off as much fat as you can and discard. Whisk the gravy until smooth, and spoon over the chops. Serves four to eight.

Collard Greens and Rice

Willie Coleman Jr., a clinical psychologist in Groton, grew up in Harlem. He passed this recipe on courtesy of his mother, Lucy Coleman. Coleman's favorite March Madness moment: watching his son, Monmouth University freshman Whitney Coleman, play in the 2006 NCAA Tournament.

Ingredients

2 pounds collard greens
1 pound fresh pork neck bones
4 cups water
salt; crushed red pepper
three ¼-inch slices of fatback or bacon
smoked turkey wing or leg (optional)
long grain white rice

Tools

sharp knife or kitchen shears
colander
4-quart or larger pan
liquid measuring cup

Wash collard greens leaf by leaf. Cut up the leaves. Discard the thick parts of the stems. Wash the cut leaves two more times. Put the greens in the colander, and let the water drain at least ten minutes. Add neck bones and water to pan; season with salt and crushed red pepper. Boil for 20 minutes. Fry fatback or bacon until crispy. Add this—along with the grease—to the boiling neck bones. Add smoked turkey wing or leg in addition to, or instead of, fatback or bacon. Add the collard greens a handful at a time to the pan. Bring back to a boil, reduce the heat, and cover the pot. Boil for 15 to 20 minutes. Prepare 2 cups rice according to package directions. Serve the collard greens and meat over the rice or with the rice on the side.

Sweet Sixteen Beef Stew

David Spalding, a long-time therapist at Problem Gambling Services, says, “I like my stew peppery; in Medieval Europe, it was the most popular spice.” This concoction is guaranteed to get you off the couch and into the kitchen for seconds, especially when you make it with Connecticut-grown vegetables.

Ingredients

1 to 1½ pounds London broil or lean stewing beef, cut into 1-inch cubes
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 quart beef broth
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
4 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
two sweet potatoes—about 4 cups—cut into large chunks
two large shallots or yellow onions—about 1 cup—chopped
two cups white potatoes, cut into large chunks
two large carrots—about 2 cups—thickly sliced
two stalks celery—about ½ cup—thickly sliced
one parsnip—about ½ cup—thickly sliced
1 cup mushrooms, thickly sliced; 1 cup fresh or frozen peas
two bay leaves; spring water

Tools

large stew pot; liquid measuring cup; measuring spoons
stirring spoon

On high heat, heat the oil and quickly brown the beef. Add beef broth, salt, and pepper. Bring the liquid almost to a boil. Add Worcestershire sauce and sweet potatoes, reduce the heat to medium-low, and simmer uncovered for one hour. Add the rest of the ingredients, pour in just enough water to cover the contents, and continue simmering for another one to two hours or until the sweet potatoes become soft. Remove the bay leaves. Stir vigorously, breaking down the sweet potatoes to thicken the broth. Add more salt and pepper if desired. Serve and enjoy the game. Serves four to six.

Take It to the Rim Mediterranean Chicken

Jane Maher owns Snootyfoods (www.snootyfood.com), whose natural and organic specialty foods emphasize the use of the finest quality ingredients. This recipe makes two servings, but what team has only two players? We suggest making it for four, six, or eight, simply by doubling, tripling, or quadrupling the recipe.

Ingredients

two skinless, boneless chicken breasts
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons Snootyfood Multi-Tasking Garlic Herb Butter
¼ cup white cooking wine
3 tablespoons light cream from your local dairy farm
1 cup coarsely chopped Connecticut-grown fresh tomatoes or 1/3 cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes!
1/3 cup coarsely chopped black olives—use your favorites
¼ cup chicken stock or water
¼ cup walnuts, chopped
¼ cup Connecticut-grown flat leaf parsley, chopped
salt and pepper to taste

Tools

non-stick skillet, with cover; stirring spoon or spatula
tongs; serving dish

Heat the olive oil in a non-stick skillet and add both chicken breasts. Cook on medium heat until brown, about one minute. Turn and cook another minute or two, until browned on both sides. Remove chicken from skillet and set aside. Add garlic herb butter to skillet. When almost melted, stir in the cooking wine and cream. When well blended, stir in the tomatoes and olives and return the chicken to the pan, spooning the sauce over it to coat. If the sauce is too thick, add some chicken stock or water. Cover and simmer on low another minute until the chicken is hot and cooked through. Use the tongs to place chicken on a serving dish and pour the sauce over the top. Sprinkle with the walnuts, parsley, salt, and pepper and serve immediately.

Two-on-One Salmon or Chicken Putanesca

Here's another winner from Cantina chef Tomaso Prozano. "Fresh food," he says, "reminds me of my childhood in Italy where Momma always prepared what was in season and grown nearby." At his rural home, Tomaso raises vegetables, herbs, and livestock.

Ingredients

three to four cloves garlic
olive oil—enough to cover the bottom of the pan
two to four anchovy fillets
12 to 15 large capers in water
18 to 24 unpitted calamata olives
eight to ten sun-dried tomatoes
two cherry peppers, cut in half
four 8- to 14-ounce salmon fillets or chicken breasts
flour for dredging salmon
1 to 2 ounces white cooking wine
8 ounces canned, peeled plum tomatoes
dried oregano, salt, and black pepper to taste

Tools

ovenproof skillet large enough to hold the salmon or chicken
cooking spoon or spatula
table fork for mashing anchovies
measuring spoons

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Pit the olives. Sauté garlic and oil for two minutes; add the anchovy fillets and mash to a paste as they heat. Add the capers, olives, and cherry peppers, and cook until the flavors blend, about five minutes. Add the cooking wine. Dredge the salmon or chicken in flour, and place on top of the sautéed vegetables and anchovies. Squeeze the tomatoes over the top and add the tomatoes. Sprinkle with dried oregano, salt, and black pepper to taste. Bake for 15 minutes. Serves four.

Hoops History: How Connecticut Grew the Game

Few people recognize the name of one of basketball's founding fathers—New Britain's Bernadotte (Bert) Loomis—or know how his invention revolutionized the game. Without it, James Naismith's 1890s creation wouldn't have had any bounce and might have faded from the scene. Bert's invention, dribbling, was not part of Naismith's original game, but it gave Bert's team a huge advantage and figured prominently in the New Britain YMCA's world championship victory in 1896.

Almost 2,500 fans packed Hannah's Armory in New Britain as the 27 and 1 YMCA team demolished the visiting Nelson Athletic Club of New York by a score of 14 to 1. Bert's dribbling stole the show as he eluded the heavily favored New Yorkers.

One of Bert's most ardent fans, former *New Britain Herald* sports editor Bart Fisher, has been lobbying hard for the 5-foot, 6-inch Loomis's admission to the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield. In an August 18, 2006, front-page story, Fisher wrote:

“Before Bert Loomis and the New Britain team, the ball could only be advanced by passing. Loomis gave the game a different face, a different pace and a whole new lease on life. Today, hundreds of millions play worldwide, not the way Naismith first drew it up and wrote it down, but rather in the style that Loomis innovated. More than anyone else, including Naismith, he is responsible for the game's worldwide popularity.”

Hoops History: March Madness

Brent Musberger is credited with introducing the term *March Madness* to the nation while analyzing the NCAA tournament in a 1982 CBS broadcast. But March Madness, a registered trademark of the Illinois High School Sports Association and the NCAA, is much older. It originated in Illinois as the title of a 1939 essay by Hall of Famer Henry V. Porter describing his hoops-crazy state's annual boys' high school basketball tournament. That tournament, with more than 900 teams playing by the late 1930s, was the stuff of dreams and legend, epitomized by the 1952 state champion Hebron, a school with only 98 students.

Connecticut has plenty of its own great memories and legends from both small towns and big cities. Basketball has been called the city game for good reason. Most of the great male players cut their basketball teeth on the asphalt courts of city parks and in the gyms of urban schools. Most of the state's top players learned the game in Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury, or Bridgeport.

There are exceptions, though. Two of UConn's greatest men's basketball players, Walt Dropo and Art Quimby, learned the game in small town Connecticut. On the women's side, small towns produced many of the state's best, including Jen Rizzotti, Nykesha Sales, and Maria Conlon. The tiny town of Killingly scored with Tracy Lis, who still holds the state's scholastic career scoring record. On the men's side, top small-town players include Morris's Chuck Alexsinas, Old Saybrook's Vin Baker, South Windsor's Tom Roy, Trumbull's Harold Jensen, and Monroe's Mike Gminski.

Many legendary teams came out of the era when New England champs were crowned in an annual tournament held at the Boston Garden in front of up to 15,000 screaming fans. Connecticut teams, especially those from New Haven and Hartford, often dominated. Unfortunately, such events as the violent end to the 1958 championship, which featured Wilbur Cross High School and Dom Perno, hastened the tournament's demise. Rioting fans, sparked by a punch thrown by a Somerville player in the waning moments of the Wilbur Cross victory, spilled into parking lots, where dozens of cars were over turned and torched.

The 1970s might have produced the greatest number of high-achieving Connecticut-grown boys' basketball players. In the beginning of the era, future All-American John Williamson came out of Wilbur Cross. Other greats included John Bagley, Soup Campbell, Rod Foster, Mike Gminski, Tony Hanson, Walter Luckett, Rich Mahorn, Wes Mathews, Frank Oleynick, Tom Roy, Corny Thompson, and Sly Williams. Soup Campbell's 1973–1974 Wilbur Cross team ranked number one in the nation, and the *New York Post* dubbed it "The Best High School Team in the World."

The 1970s were great for women's basketball too. In that pre-Geno era, Southern Connecticut State University was a national power that competed against big schools. The 1973 and 1974 squads ranked third in the nation and featured plenty of Connecticut-grown talent, including Olympian Mary Anne O'Connor. Southern basketball alumni from the 1970s also include three of the nation's top Division I basketball coaches: Cathy Inglese, Wallingford, Boston College; Marnie Dacko, Trumbull, UMass; and Joan Bonvicini, Bridgeport, Arizona.

Credits

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